Applicant : Zhaoxi Bu et al.
Serial No. : 09/842,025
Filed : April 26, 2001
Page : 2 of 15

Attorney's Docket No.: 06975-083001 /
Communications 14

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of retrieving electronic data from a communications system, the method comprising:

establishing a connection ~~to~~ between a client system and a host ~~the communications~~ system using a first account of a user;

initiating a first communication session over the connection associated with the first account of the user maintained by the host system; and

automatically initiating, over the same connection to the host system, one or more additional communication sessions associated with one or more additional accounts of the user maintained by the host system.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising accessing electronic data associated with the first account of the user.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising accessing electronic data associated with the one or more additional accounts of the user.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising accessing electronic data associated with the one or more additional accounts of the user.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein accessing electronic data comprises retrieving e-mail.

6. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein accessing electronic data comprises sending e-mail.

Applicant : Zhaoxi Bu et al.
Serial No. : 09/842,025
Filed : April 26, 2001
Page : 3 of 15

Attorney's Docket No.: 06975-083001 /
Communications 14

7. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein accessing electronic data comprises downloading one or more files.

8 (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein accessing electronic data comprises retrieving messages posted on a message board.

9. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein accessing electronic data comprises posting messages to a message board.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the first account and the one or more additional accounts of the user comprise different screen names.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein automatically initiating one or more additional communication sessions comprises automatically switching between the different screen names.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising setting preferences for initiating the first communication session.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein setting preferences comprises scheduling a time to initiate the first communication session.

14. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising setting preferences for initiating the one or more additional communication sessions.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein setting preferences comprises scheduling a time to automatically initiate the one or more additional communications session.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising setting different preferences for

Applicant : Zhaoxi Bu et al.
Serial No. : 09/842,025
Filed : April 26, 2001
Page : 4 of 15

Attorney's Docket No.: 06975-083001 /
Communications 14

initiating the first communication session and for initiating the one or more additional communication sessions.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the first communication session is initiated automatically.

18. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising running the first communication session and the one or more additional communication sessions in parallel.

19. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the user comprises a single member of an online service.

20. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the user comprises multiple members of the online service.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20 wherein the multiple members are related.

22. (Currently Amended) A computer program tangibly embodied in a computer-readable medium, the computer program product including instructions that, when executed, for retrieving retrieve electronic data from a communications system the computer program being stored on a computer readable medium and comprising instructions for, the computer program product configured to:

establishing establish a connection to between a client system and a host the communications system using a first account of the user;

initiating initiate a first communication session over the connection associated with the first account of the user maintained by the host system; and

automatically initiate, initiating over the same connection to the host system, one or more additional communication sessions associated with one or more additional accounts of the user maintained by the host system.

Applicant : Zhaoxi Bu et al.
Serial No. : 09/842,025
Filed : April 26, 2001
Page : 5 of 15

Attorney's Docket No.: 06975-083001 /
Communications 14

23. (Currently Amended) The computer program of claim 22 ~~wherein the computer readable medium comprises a disc~~ further comprising instructions that, when executed, access electronic data associated with the one or more additional accounts of the user.

24. (Currently Amended) The computer program of claim 22 ~~wherein the computer readable medium comprises a client device~~ further comprising instructions that, when executed, access e-mail data.

25. (Currently Amended) The computer program of claim 22 further comprising instructions that, when executed, download one or more files~~wherein the computer readable medium comprises a host device~~.

26. (Currently Amended) The computer program of claim 22 wherein the first account and the one or more additional accounts of the user comprise different screen names ~~the computer readable medium comprises a propagated signal~~.

27. (Currently Amended) A communications apparatus for retrieving electronic data from a communications system, the apparatus being configured to:
   establish a connection ~~to~~ between a client system and a host ~~the communications~~ system using a first account of the user;
   initiate a first communication session over the connection associated with the first account of the user maintained by the host system; and
   automatically initiate, over the same connection to the host system, one or more additional communication sessions associated with one or more additional accounts of the user maintained by the host system.

28. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein automatically initiating comprises automatically initiating, over the same connection to the host system, one or more additional communication sessions associated with one or more additional accounts of the user maintained

Applicant : Zhaoxi Bu et al.
Serial No. : 09/842,025
Filed : April 26, 2001
Page : 6 of 15

Attorney's Docket No.: 06975-083001 /
Communications 14

by the host system in response to a preference set by the user prior to initiation of the one or more additional communication sessions.

29. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein automatically initiating comprises automatically initiating, over the same connection to the host system, one or more additional communication sessions between the client system and the host system associated with one or more additional accounts of the user maintained by the host system.

30. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein authentication information associated with the one or more additional accounts of the user may be used to enable access to the host system.

31. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein authentication information associated with each of the one or more additional accounts of the user may be used to enable access to the host system.

32. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein authentication information associated with the first account and at least one of the one or more additional accounts of the user may be used to enable access to the host system.

33. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein establishing the connection between a client system and the host system and initiating a first communication session over the connection associated with the first account of the user occur automatically and without user manipulation.

34. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein automatically initiating, over the same connection to the host system, one or more additional communication sessions associated with one or more additional accounts of the user maintained by the host system occurs automatically and without user manipulation.

35. (New) The method of claim 1 further comprising automatically synchronizing data related to the first account of the user or the one or more additional accounts of the user wherein,

Applicant : Zhaoxi Bu et al.
Serial No. : 09/842,025
Filed : April 26, 2001
Page : 7 of 15

Attorney's Docket No.: 06975-083001 /
Communications 14

prior to synchronization, the data related to the first account of the user or the one or more additional accounts of the user was stored on only one of the client system or the host system.

36. (New) The method of claim 35 wherein synchronizing data comprises one or more of sending an e-mail message written using the client system when the client system was not connected to the host system, retrieving from the host system an unread e-mail message, posting a message to a newsgroup or message board that was written using the client system when the client system was not connected to the host system, and retrieving from the host system a message to a newsgroup or message board.

37. (New) The method of claim 35 wherein automatically synchronizing data related to each of several accounts associated with the user.

38. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein:

the host system is a network access service provider that provides network access service to enable the user to access systems other than the host system,

the first account of the user corresponds to a first e-mail account of the user provided by the host system, and

one of the one or more additional accounts of the user corresponds to an additional e-mail account provided by the host system.

39. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein:

the host system is a network access service provider that provides network access service to enable the user to access systems other than the host system,

the first account of the user corresponds to a first screen name for an instant messaging service provided by the host system, and

one of the one or more additional accounts of the user corresponds to an additional screen name for the instant messaging service provided by the host system.

40. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein:

Applicant : Zhaoxi Bu et al.
Serial No. : 09/842,025
Filed : April 26, 2001
Page : 8 of 15

Attorney's Docket No.: 06975-083001 /
Communications 14

the host system is a network access service provider that provides network access service
to enable the user to access systems other than the host system,

one of the first account of the user or at least one of the one or more additional accounts
of the user corresponds to a screen name for an instant messaging service provided by the host
system, and

other of the first account of the user or the at least one of the one or more additional
accounts of the user correspond to an e-mail account provided by the host system.

41. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein automatically initiating comprises
automatically initiating, over the same connection to the host system, at least one of the one or
more additional communication sessions associated with one or more additional accounts of the
user maintained by the host system when the user is not present at the client system.